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CARL AND ANNA

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* In preparation	

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PSYCHE

# CARL AND ANNA

BY  
LEONHARD FRANK

TRANSLATED INTO BASIC ENGLISH

BY  
L. W. LOCKHART

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## INTRODUCTION

[*Those who are not already familiar with "Carl and Anna" are advised to read the story itself before discovering from the Introduction the conditions under which the translation was made]*

This volume is a literary experiment, the first of its kind.

- Basic English is an experiment with language, the first systematic attempt to provide a Universal Language whose vocabulary can be learnt in a few days.

The Vocabulary of Basic English, together with all the Rules required by English translators, can be printed on the back of a single sheet of business notepaper. In its minimum form (for mnemonic purposes) it consists of 500 words, exclusive of operators, etc.; or a full total of 850 words for general purposes, here reproduced as a frontispiece.

These words will do the work of the 20,000 common words usually required

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in any existing language for the same purpose. Their effect is that of ordinary English—only simpler, and somewhat less idiomatic, the most important stylistic change being due to the elimination of all verbs, except the 16 forms which make it possible to deal with the fundamental operations.

A full account of the system and how it may be learnt and used for reading, writing, and speaking by those who do not know English will be found in *Basic English*, uniform with the present volume. It is not designed to take the place of existing languages, but to be used as a second or Auxiliary language, for purposes of trade and commerce, travel, world-radio, talking-pictures, and congresses.

With the addition of 100 general scientific words and 50 words for any particular science, a point is reached where international scientific terms and formulae can be incorporated; so that, with a total vocabulary of 1,000 words, any science can also be adequately covered. Ordinarily about 50,000 words are required for this purpose.

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Since English is already the spoken or administrative language of more than 500,000,000 people, the practical advantages of such a system are obvious. In comparison with any artificial language, it starts with over half the civilized world 'converted', as it were, by the unconscious labour of five centuries.

Standard English, however, is far too difficult to serve as an Auxiliary language; and artificial systems would require many centuries of propaganda to reach the level to which, from the practical point of view, English has already attained.

No other existing language, as explained in *Basic English*, is capable of radical simplification: no other European language can dispense with 'verbs'; no Eastern language can cope with science.

The task of simplification has occupied over ten years, and was undertaken by The Orthological Institute in the first instance as a theoretical study, in the second as a contribution to World Peace. Though Basic English was not, and is not, designed to deal with 'literature', it was decided early in 1930 to make an

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appeal to the public with a literary model.

The success of *Carl and Anna* with the general reader recommends it for this first attempt. It already has an international public (the original has reached its 30th thousand ; it is also a successful play and an 'Ufa' film), and the English translation by Mr. Cyrus Brooks<sup>1</sup> had an excellent reception.

The following are some opinions :—

"It is hard to convey the quality of the story in words of one's own. It is a remarkable and moving tale, in which experience which has been deeply felt is rendered with strength and delicacy."—*Times Literary Supplement*.

"A little masterpiece of burning simplicity."—*Spectator*.

"A brief spring-song of beauty, clear, complete, lovely, without a superfluous word."—*Daily Herald*.

"He has modelled a shape of love which is, perhaps, as near to the ultimate reality of sex as it is possible for an artist to approach."—*Referee*.

"The whole novel is one manifestation of beauty and power."—*Glasgow Herald*.

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1929 by Peter Davies, Ltd., price 3s. 6d.

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### THE TRANSLATION

The consent of the author and of the English publisher having been obtained, the translation was begun and completed in April, 1930. The translator was provided only with the 850-word vocabulary of the frontispiece, and the Rules for English Translators laid down in *Basic English*. In accordance with these rules the vocabulary has been employed as in Standard English, but a certain discrimination has been exercised in metaphor and idiom to avoid obscurities. It is hoped that in this way the foreigner will be able to understand by inference even where he has not actual knowledge of the constructions used.

In this specimen translation greater care has been taken in the elimination of difficulties than would ordinarily be expected of the translator. These additional limitations have made it impossible to exploit to the full the stylistic possi-

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bilities of Basic on the present occasion, nor have such extra abbreviations as *never* for 'not ever' been employed.

Following the instructions for translation given in the Grammar, the operators (verb forms) have been conjugated in the usual way, and the pronouns declined in both case and gender. Other formations that have been assumed are plurals, comparatives, adverbs (in *ly* from adjectives) and the prefix *un*. Use has also been made of the four derivatives generated by the noun forms, two nouns (*er* and *ing* suffixes) and two adjectives (*ing* and *ed* suffixes) wherever these are available in Standard English. These forms the foreigner will learn to manipulate himself in the grammar. Some twenty words such as *Radio* and *Hotel*, which are already international, can also be drawn upon. Proper names, such as *Europe*, have been used in their English form throughout, and likewise the system of numerals, measurement terms, days of the week and names of the months. Where it has been found necessary to introduce a word not part of the system, italics are used and

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the equivalent in various languages might be supplied in a glossary.

The completion of the work affords interesting statistical material demonstrating the saving in vocabulary which results from the Basic system. In this translation just over 700 Basic words have been used and 6 non-Basic words<sup>1</sup> introduced by the method provided. The Standard English translation employs approximately the same number of Basic words and adds to these a further 1,300. It will thus be seen that the Basic vocabulary reduces the Standard vocabulary by very nearly two-thirds in a total of about 20,000 consecutive words.

The extent of this reduction can be adequately gauged, however, only if one takes into account the comparatively small part which the rare-frequency words play numerically in ordinary discourse. We know<sup>2</sup> that the 10 commonest words cover over 25%, and the 700 commonest words over 70% of average

<sup>1</sup> Steppe, pickaxe, frog, carrot, violin, cello.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Problem of a Universal Language*, uniform with this volume (in preparation).

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written material. Allowing for the fact that the Basic vocabulary has approximately a 25% divergence from the 850 commonest words, one may still assume that it will account for at least 60% of any non-technical author's vocabulary. It is probable, therefore, that the two-thirds economy of the whole *Carl and Anna* text has been made through changes affecting rather less than half of it.

But to understand the full significance of these statistics, it must be realized that the Standard version of *Carl and Anna* represents a selection made from the words contained in the pocket form of *The Oxford Dictionary*, while the Basic translation represents a selection drawn from a reservoir of only 850. The addition of about 6 words in 20,000 outside this reservoir places no extra burden on the memory since each book is printed with its own separate glossary and the reader need only keep the non-Basic words in mind for the purpose of the work in hand. But no such *ad hoc* solution is possible in the case of Standard English—the vocabulary multiplies itself too rapidly.

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In the Standard translation of *Carl and Anna* there are an average of 26 new non-Basic words introduced per page on the first five pages of the book and 5 words on the last five pages, a figure which probably represents the stabilized rate of increase. But on turning to a second book one finds the vocabulary increasing almost as fast as on the first pages of the original book. For example, it was ascertained that on the first five pages of D. H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock*, an average of 24 new words not to be found in *Carl and Anna* was being introduced on every page, in addition to a number of non-Basic words already listed from the first book. With an average of three new words for each of the last 100 pages of *The White Peacock*, a total of about 5,000 would have been reached to cover two novels. A third might add another 1,500—and so the process of augmentation goes on, until\* with only a dozen volumes we might be nearing 30,000.

It follows then, that to ensure an understanding of an average sample of literature in Standard form, the foreigner must be

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equipped at least with the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (40,000 common words). But to cover it in Basic he need still arm himself only with his first vocabulary, available in its entirety, as already stated, "on the back of a single sheet of business note-paper". How far the pleasure of reading is destroyed by practising so rigid an economy, the general opinion of readers alone will decide. It is hoped that the present translation may serve as a basis for the formation of that opinion.

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### I

Away over the far-off curve of the Earth, which was the limit of the *steppe*, somewhere between Europe and Asia, there came into view a point smaller than a song-bird. And though it was coming in the direction of the two men at almost a hundred miles an hour, it seemed to be without motion, for ever in the same position in the blue distance, so wide was the stretch of earth and sky, so without limit.

Though it was moving forward at so great a rate, almost a quarter of an hour had gone by before it was possible to make out the lines of an airplane, and though it kept the same distance from the earth all the time, it seemed to be going up in a great curve.

Balanced high in the heat mist, over the two men, the airman saw, looking down on the steppe, a great black mark.

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like two lines going across one another, very long and very wide, formed by the long, deep holes hollowed out by the two men in the black earth of the steppe.

The airman had no idea of the purpose of these holes in the middle of the steppe far from the houses of men. He went on into the West, ever keeping the same distance up, but seeming now to be slipping down in a great curve nearer and nearer to the Earth. A quarter of an hour more, and again the size of a small bird, he went from view over the edge of the steppe.

The two men were, as before, by themselves in the great quiet space.

They had no more knowledge than the man in the plane of the purpose of the holes. It seemed to them that possibly they might have been designed for making a wall, so that in time of need one would be able to let water in on the steppe against oncoming armies.

At the start of the war when they were first made prisoners, they had been sent here with food, which later came to them month by month, and a small building of

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iron easily taken to pieces ; and for four summers they had been at work with their spades, with no one in authority over them. Frequently they took long rests ; sometimes they would let half the day go by, sleeping in the grass ; but in the end they had always gone back to work. For a man has to do something.

All the time birds went back and forward, looking for food. There seemed to be a great quiet in the thousand-voiced, ever-changing music of the grass-insects, as though the Earth had come to the middle point of existence, and was waiting with ears wide open. The *pickaxe* went through a worm, cutting it in half. Lifting the half worm out of the earth, the man sent it up into the air. It was taken by a bird in flight.

"My place was on the inside of the bed, by the wall, and hers on the outside ; and when she got up in the morning she did so without me hearing her. She was very quiet, do you see?—so very, very quiet."

"You have said that before. You

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would not get up before the whistle of the gas-flame came to your ears."

"That is so; every time it made the same note. Frequently I was going to put it right. But then I had to go to the war." The married man went on with his work. The hair on his face was long, and uncared for.

His friend was stretched out on the grass near him. He took a piece of grass in his mouth, and then another.

"The question I frequently put to myself is, 'Why is it that the upper part of her body is so white, and the rest of her body and her legs a so much deeper colour?'" And when the married man made no answer:

"Like copper, you say?"

"When you have her, you have no thought of anything but her."

Half an hour later, without any cause so it seemed, the cloud of birds took wing, and came down at a point farther off from the two men. Then they came back to them. Again they did this, and again. So great was their number that the sky was almost shut out when they were in flight.

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The man went on talking. "But that is almost four years back. Sometimes the memory of her goes completely. I am unable to see her face, quite unable to see it! It all gets clouded, Carl. But when she comes to me in sleep, she is so living, it would be possible to have the feeling that one was touching her."

"I've got a clear picture of her. Everything! . . . and what sort of woman she is. Everything!"

"But you have not ever seen her . . . I would be with her in such a short time if I was in that airplane, though she is so far off . . . Who is able to put up with so much? Four years!"

"At least there is somebody living who has you in her thoughts."

"Yes, that's so. That's very true."

"Someone who's there, waiting for you. But I—when I let myself have such thoughts—there's nothing there at all."

"Yes, she's waiting. If she's living after all these years."

"She's living," the other quickly made answer. And, seating himself in the grass again, he let his eyes go out

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across the steppe. He saw the woman he had not seen. He saw her dusting the furniture in the little room he had not ever been in, saw her go across to the day-bed and make the cover smooth. There she was, bent down over it. The bed came out at an angle into the room. So detailed was his knowledge. And he saw the colour of the cover and the design on it.

"Richard ! If she was here now, married to you, would you—Richard, would you let me have her, for one time only ?"

The married man put his two hands on the spade, and his chin came to rest on them. "If she was here now—" He was unable to take in the idea.

"Give me an answer."

For a long time he kept his eyes on the man at his side. "Possibly—because we are in the same trouble together. For one time. . . . Possibly. . . . But if you made a second attempt, you would get your head smashed in with this pickaxe."

"The gas ! Does it make the same noise as before ?"

The grass became shaded by a cloud.

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The song of the insects seemed to go farther and farther off into the steppe, and at last was out of hearing. From quite near by came one short note. The last insect came to the end of its song. In the complete quiet the two men were suddenly conscious of the rhythm of their blood. In the distance, the rays of the sun made parts of the steppe like brightly flaming gold.

The sun overcame the shade of the cloud, lighting up the grass. The summer noise, with its thousand voices, came into being again, now loud, now soft, stretching from one edge of the steppe to the other. Not one blade of grass was moving.

"But Anna would not do it. She is not for other men . . . I've given you the story of how it was, on our first night together, the trouble I had. She was over twenty-three then—but I have said all this before. So, you may see for yourself, Carl."

For four long summers, with nothing to take his thoughts off his desires, he had kept no secrets from his friend; and normally he was a man who said little.

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Looking back, the worst times seemed in some way happy, the hard work, day after day, in order that one might have bread and keep a roof over one's head. For now it was being all by oneself that was so hard ; and the present, the weight of it.

Carl, who had gone through all this with him, had knowledge of everything—that the bed-cushion was in three parts, and the lines of Anna's body curved and well-marked ; that her desires had first to overcome her delicate feelings ; that she was then a woman of power, but that at other times she was very quiet, quick with her fingers, and kept the house clean and in order. The fork for getting the burned-out coals away from the fire-place had a brass hand-piece. Anna had three small birth-marks, brown like a piece of silk. He was able to give the position of the oven, to say where the coal-fork was kept, and where the three marks were. Because he had no one and nothing which was his, the picture of Anna had become clear to him.

“ But what if she has not been true to

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you while you have been away from her, and taken another man? Four years is a long time, Richard, for a woman whose blood is warm. . . . Possibly you would not be so slow, if there were women in the grass in place of insects."

"Here is something which may be new to you. When Anna and I came into the town, we were able to get a little room, and directly we got it we put furniture into it which we were getting on the part-payment system. A week later I had to go to the war."

"You have said all that before. Payments of six marks every month."

"But before the news came that I was to go, we said to ourselves: Now if we keep on to our room, all will be well. And I am certain that Anna has gone on with that idea. She's got no time for those other thoughts. It will take all her care to keep our little place together."

"Perhaps that is why she —"

"What has that to do with you? Keep a clean tongue in your head, at least. And as for Anna, I would — But I am certain. She would not do a thing

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like that!" He took up his pickaxe and sent it down violently into the earth.

Desire, without the power to give force to his desire, had frequently made him put all his heart into working at those holes, holes which had no purpose; and now as he went on, lifting and dropping his pickaxe, his doubts were crushed down by the hard work.

When a boy of two, Carl had made a cart out of his mother's hat. It had long bands, and he had put himself like a horse between the bands and gone out across the square, through the holes full of rain-water, pulling the new hat after him wherever he went. After that experience his power of making thought-pictures had given him more pain than pleasure. Resting where he was, not moving, all sorts of fears came into his head. Then the sun went down, and Richard's pickaxe, lifted up in the air, made a great shade outline on the grass.\*

The west was flaming with the fires of sundown. The red-gold wheel had not quite come to rest on the edge of the steppe. Now, only the points of the grass near

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the two men were touched by the gold light. Farther on, the steppe was a deep black-green, and in the far east night was coming up into the sky. The noise of the insects seemed out of all control. There was a wet smell about the warm air.

Like a good iron-worker who, when his day's work is done, puts things ready for the day to come, Richard got all the loose earth out of the hole before he put on his coat.

When they had been walking for a quarter of an hour, their boots were so wet that they made a noise with every step. The deep colour had gone out of the sky. The iron house seemed cold and dead in the grey, unbroken stretch of the steppe.

The morning after they went to the prison buildings to get their food. They had done the journey every month for four summers, a day's walk there and a day's walk back, one walking in front of the other. The grass came up again after their feet had made it flat. When they had gone there was little sign that they had been that way.

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Carl and Richard were metal-workers. One was as tall as the other, and their skin had that dark colour common to men of their trade.

At the prison, a group of prisoners were ready to go off somewhere. "We will take one of those two to make up the number," said the man in authority, and gave Richard's name.

Five minutes later, without having had time to say a last word to Carl, he was walking with the others to the railway station, from which all the company was sent some days' journey east.

## II

The day after Richard had gone, Carl made his flight from the prison. The desire for Anna sent him forward on his long journey.

He had made up his mind that he would go into the room to her, and make out that they were married, that he was Richard; and he had come to this decision because of his fear that if he came to her in any other way he might not be able to

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keep her for ever. There was no attraction for him in a quickly-ending pleasure. The full need of his being was for someone to whom he would be the living flame, and who would be the living flame to him.

That he was in the same trade, was of the same make of body, had the same coloured hair and eyes, the dark skin common to all metal-workers ; and that, like Richard, the lines of hair over his eyes were thick and strongly arched—these were things to which he gave but a minute's thought.

All the details of Anna's past existence with Richard were as clear to him as if he had taken part in it himself. He was full of Anna's being. In his mind she had become the resting place, which it is the hope of every man to come upon in another. She had his love.

Three months after his flight from the prison, Carl came to the town where Anna was living.

He had made the long journey with the ever-present fear of being made prisoner again, walking by night through woods,

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going from cover to cover, sometimes in one country, sometimes in another, on foot by the sides of rivers in the bright sun. And all this time he had gone to rest under a roof no more than two or three times.

The first groups of houses on the outer edge of the town came darkly up out of the middle of the newly-cut fields of the Fall. The town was strange to him, but he was quite clear about the look of the house, and had taken note of its number. He would be able to make his way there. It was not far.

A fall of rain at sundown had taken the dust from the face and shoes of the man who was now so near his journey's end. He went into a hair-cutting place, put his little parcel, which was done up in wet newspaper and kept together with a leather band, down on a seat, and put his hat on the parcel.

The hair-cutter put the hat on a hook and with a motion of his hand made Carl take up his position.

All the time he was in prison Carl had taken the hair off his face every Saturday,

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and frequently he had said to Richard :  
“ If in the old days you were without hair on your face, and after all these years you go back with that growth, Anna will not take you for the same person at first.”

Full of the happy thoughts and the high hopes of a man coming back after a long time to the woman who has his love, Carl went quickly down the street to the tall house where Anna had her room. On the street floor there was a small shoe-store.

In the window there were six old shoes, a broken flower-pot turned upside down, and a sleeping cat. The store seemed quite different from Carl’s picture of it. Four years back, so Richard had said, there had been in the window at least four hundred new shoes, and there were small blue cards on which the price was marked in great yellow numbers. And right in the very front on a glass plate in the middle there were some out-sized polished boots with bright yellow upper parts, and a card having on it the words ‘ the latest thing.’

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Between then and now there has been the war, was Carl's thought. The thought was like a weight on his stomach but he would have been unable to say why. His pleasure and desire to be with Anna were gone.

"Square two, left-hand door, second floor, and second door on the left." As he went up the steps he saw the marks on the painted walls. Richard had made a picture of the design for him. The weight on his stomach did not go. He had an impulse to go and come back later. Slowly he went up the last two steps, gave a look round, went on for a short distance, and came to the door. He made out the name.

With his mind's eye he saw Anna at work in front of the gas-cooker, saw the back of her neck, and her head bent a little forward. He saw her go over to the table and come back to the cooker. Her motions seemed to come from deep down in her being, controlled and complete ; it was as though he had seen them all before, as though they made up a part of his existence.

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Carl had so detailed a knowledge of what Anna was like that if he had seen her only for a minute in a street full of persons, he would have been certain directly that it was she.

Weighted down by his feelings and with doubt in his heart, he put his great strong workman's hand between his collar and neck. Suddenly he saw himself going down the steps again.

Then, before he was conscious of it, he had made a noise on the door and got it open.

" . . . Anna !"

She came from the window to the middle of the room and took a plate from the table.

And it became clear to him that the most burning thought-picture is not equal to a breathing, moving, living human being, the changes of whose face through the blood have a connection with the living heart, and are themselves a part of living. The form of a human being has separate existence, its motions go through space, cutting their way.

A strange vibration went through Carl's

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skin. His pleasure was in his eyes.  
“Anna! Anna! Have you no memory  
of me?” It was not false.

At the sight of his pleasure, her fear  
went . . . Pleased that all was well,  
she said quite openly with a question in  
her voice, “Who are you?”

Anna had on a washed-out blue dress  
made of thick linen. In some places  
the sun had taken the colour out. Her  
simple, strongly formed face was an  
example of what all women with force of  
purpose, warm hearts, and clean thoughts  
might be like.

As at the hair-cutter’s he put his parcel  
down on the well-used seat, and then put  
his hat on the parcel.

“I will have to take the dirty marks off  
these seats and give them another coat  
of paint. I said when we got them that  
they would not keep their colour.”

Suddenly it came to Anna that Richard  
had said this. A troubled look came over  
her face.

“You haven’t seen who I am, then?”

“Who are you?”

His face went white to the lips.

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"Richard."

She took a step back, supporting herself with one hand on the table.

"The man I am married to? . . . You are not he."

"Anna!" So great was his feeling that his knees almost gave way. He went two steps and took a seat. "Anna!"

She was moved by the note in his voice. As a woman goes on doing the little things that have to be done, though crushed by a cruel blow, so Anna went to the gas-cooker, put away the salt-box, put together three used matches, and then for some seconds took up a position quite without motion, her head bent.

This position was the very one in which Carl had seen her a short time before, with his mind's eye.

She gave a turn, as though she had been out to another room, and had now come back again into the cooking-room. Points of red had come into her face, colouring her milk-white skin.

She was so true herself that she had to have some belief, though it was against

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her better knowledge, in the person who had such a note in his voice. She gave him the look of a woman who is in great danger and unable to do anything to make herself safe.

"Anna," he said, "Anna, have you no belief in me? . . . There is no one on earth for me but you."

The warm current of existence was in his smile, and all its pain and pleasure, and for him the false became true, as he said: "You are my woman."

Anna was certain that what he said was not true, and at the same time she had no doubt that his feeling was true. She made no move, but kept quite quiet with her hands folded across the front of her dress. She had been put at a loss by the fact that she had some feeling for the strange man seated there.

She went to the drawer. "Why do you say that?" Looking in the drawer she came upon an old dirty postcard, and gave it to Carl: "Four years back! Four years!" And again she took up her old position with her hands folded in front of her.

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Carl took the card, which had come from the military authorities. It was a statement of Richard's death at the Front on the 4th September, 1914. Turning the card over, and turning it back again, he went through it a second time, and then a smile came over his face :

"It is all wrong, Anna ; it is all wrong." He put his hand out for hers. "What foolish things they put on paper. . . . Take my word for it."

He was so moved by his feelings and so completely happy that for a second she did not take away her hand. There was fear in her face, and the foolish hope of a woman to whom the belief is possible, a short time after her man's death, that the door will be pushed open and the loved one come in as of old.

She made an attempt to get round the question. "Possibly you are in need of food?" A second later her thought was : I'll send him away. \*I'll give a cry and get help from someone near. And all the time she went on cutting the bread. Then she put a knife and fork on the table, and a piece of cold meat on his

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plate. Would she take the skin off an apple for him ?

“ So you’ve kept the memory of that . . . ? ” Quick as thought the blood came to her face. She took the skin off the apple, made it into four, took out the middle piece, automatically, with the air of an expert. It was the first time in his existence that he had been cared for by a woman with whom he was in love.

Looking up, she saw how moved he was, and a little smile sent the serious look from her face. She gave the plate a push a little nearer to him.

“ Where is the old fork that had the three points, with the one shorter than the other ? ”

She went to the drawer, as if sleeping, and took him the fork.

“ That’s the one,” he said, with approval, and his eyes were turned to Anna. She took a seat. Was she sleeping ?

They were seated together under the light. They were cut off from everything outside by four walls. The gas made a noise. To his right was the bed ; to his left the shelf and drawers ; and in front,

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coming out into the room, the day-bed. The window was small and square. There was a smell of bottled fruit and of the powdered grain from which she made the bread. The six bottles of fruit were ranged like ornaments on a shelf on the wall.

When two persons are together for years, they take on the details of one another's behaviour—motions, words. In taking his food, this man made his bread into long fingers, like Richard. Anna saw this fact with fear and surprise.

She had been so completely shut up in herself for years. And now Carl had come into her existence. She was moved by his needs, his feelings, by everything about him, with the desire for a fuller existence. He was causing feelings with which her reason would have nothing to do. From time to time she let go her thoughts, and had belief.

"I'll have a look for work on Monday, eh?"

Then there will be no need for me to go on at the works, she said to herself. Then everything will be as it was before,

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better, possibly—— “ . . . Why do you say you are Richard? Why do you say that?”

“ But, Anna, Anna !”

“ He was so dear to me. He was good to me all the time we were together. That memory will be with me for ever. I will not ever put the thought of him from me.”

A wave of feeling—the hate that comes from competition with another—made him unable to go on with his part naturally. And for the first time he said false things and was conscious that they were false, fearing the loss of the woman who seemed almost to have come to be his.

He gave the plate a push and took a look round.

“ The window-curtains are new? The ones we got together were yellow. The store-keeper said ‘ They are cheap at the price.’ Does it come back to you?”

“ Yes, it is all in my memory. How is this possible ?”

“ What about the payments on the furniture, Anna ?”

“ I’ve had time to make all the payments in these four years.”

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He was fingering the hair over his eye, as another man might have done the hair on his lip. It was a way he had got from Richard. Anna saw it with a sense of shock.

"Then it is possible to make a new start now without very much trouble—or care. . . . Things will go well now, Anna . . . Take a look at me . . . I . . . please, Anna, take a look at me."

Her head went forward on her folded arms.

"You will have to get into the way of it again." Under his hand, moving regularly, delicately over her hair, her body at last became quiet.

She got up. Her face had become soft, and at the same time more at rest. She took the things off the table.

Carl kept quietly at one end of the room, with head bent.

A false word, a false note at that minute, would have made a division between them as sharp as a knife-cut.

From her general behaviour—the way she put the table in order, gave him a quick look now and again for no special reason, got the window shut and the curtains

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pulled across—he saw that she had made up her mind to get her position clear in relation to this new event, and to see what was to come of it.

She gave her answers to his questions directly. She was working in a card-box works. She said how much money she was making. While she was talking she took the dead flowers from the two red plants.

Then there was nothing more to do. She was ready to go to bed. She took up a position with her back against the window-shelf.

There was a strange force between them, keeping them parted, like that between two lovers in the early stages of their love-making, when they are by themselves in a room.

“I’ve got thirty-five pfennigs,” he said, with a sudden burst of pleasure, “no more and no less.”

Pointing with her finger to the day bed, she said, “You may go to sleep there.” And her hand went back quickly to the window-shelf.

When he took his eyes from the day-

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bed to have another look at her, she was at the linen-box. She took the best linen coverings, and put a cover on a cushion from her bed.

"We had better put it against the wall," she said. Together they got the day-bed pushed against the wall. Anna, her body bent over his bed, put the covers straight as he had seen her do when he was thousands of miles off on the steppe.

"I'll put the light out," she said. It was dark by this time.

While taking off his clothes, he came to a stop for a while and kept quite quiet, waiting for the small sounds she made. And she became quiet then as well, with one leg across the other, and her hands on the stocking she was pulling down. He was on his back, with his hands under his head, and his eyes and ears open. For a time no sound came to him. "Are you in bed?" He put his question to her again. And from the sound of her "Yes" it was clear that she was resting as he was doing, awake with open eyes.

All round were the noises of the town, a harmony made up of the horns of motors,

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far and near. Only the room was quiet, deeply quiet.

Fearing the noise she would make, with a strange man so near, Anna kept quite quiet in bed, not moving. Only when the sound of his regular breathing came to her ears did she let herself get into a position of greater comfort.

Carl had not gone to bed between clean linen for weeks. The muscles of his legs were moving all the time from being over-tired. The sides of rivers, wide stretches of bright water, stone-faced mountains, black woods, white roads to which there seemed to be no end, far-off views and strong, near details went through his brain, a natural moving-picture, cut into a thousand pieces and put together again anyhow.

Then he saw the country he was in as a boy, so much a part of his sleep experience. A boy again, ten years old, he was walking out of the town with his father, across the fields in the direction of a little town placed in the middle of sloping country, in the clear air of a Sunday morning.

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They went into the beer-house of the place, and took seats under an old tree. Near by was the garden, bright with flowers. The old farmer went by outside, down the quiet street. He made a motion to them with his head.

Carl's father was laughing with the owner's daughter. He took her by the arm.

"Let go of her," said Carl. "That's Anna."

His father quickly took his hand away. Then the owner's daughter put her arm round Carl's neck, and looking at him like a mother, gave him a great glass of milk.

He came out of his sleep happy and rested, with a sense of everything being well.

Anna was sleeping.

He was moved suddenly by a sense of the dear weight of care he had taken upon himself, and as there came to his ears the sound of a sleeping, breathing being, he became conscious of the strange quality of sleep.

He was overcome by the deep feeling in his heart that existence was good.

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### III

Richard was seated on the canvas bed in the little iron house. "Well, it's like this," he said ; and making his lips into a small round, he gave a whistle like that of the gas-cooker in his and Anna's room.

The train went by at full steam, away into the flat country ; then slowly on, a thin snake, through the green of the skyline. Carl was hearing a sound in the distance, the long, far-off, feeble whistle of the engine, which came from Richard's rounded lips. Then his eyes were open.

The room was full of morning sunlight. A metal pot of steaming water for the coffee was on the gas-cooker. The dirty burner gave out a whistle, all the time the same note. Nobody was in Anna's bed ; the cover had been folded back.

"Four? But generally you have two." The bread man put his hand into the mountain of bread-rolls for two more brown ones, such as were most pleasing to Anna. "And now you have need of four?"

A sudden happy feeling gave birth to

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a little laugh inside her which was printed on her lips and gave a warmer colour to her face. The two lines of teeth were of a good size, regular and white.

Anna had the milk-like colour of the red-haired, though in her thick hair there was almost no red to be seen. On the sides of her nose, near the eyes, were one or two brown sun-marks.

The hundred thousand motions which her quick hands had gone through every day for years in the card-box works, had made them thin and full of feeling. They were like the hands of those women of delicate organization who are produced only by years of selection within the highest circle of society.

On her feet, which were small for her size, she had her best shoes. As she came through the door, with the great, full, milk-coloured pot in her hand—she had on a thin summer dress, and the curves of her body were to be seen through the light material, the simple, natural lines of a woman—Carl was bent over the gas-cooker.

I was going to get this put right before

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the war, was his thought. The effect of Anna being present was so strong that he did not say the words out loud, though at that minute, with the feelings he had, they would not have been false.

Anna seemed dressed brightly as though she had flowers on.

His eyes were fixed on the woman in the doorway, as clean-looking as the milk itself. Automatically, his fingers went up to his shirt to get the edges pulled together across his deep-coloured, black-haired skin, under which the muscles were to be seen. He had no coat on. Only trousers and a leather band. His white shirt was crushed. Some days before, he had given himself and his shirt a wash in the river, and then let them get dry in the sun.

Though Carl was washed and had taken the hair off his face, the outdoor smell of river and wood and the long, long journey were about him. In this way he had come back to normal conditions of living, where there was a bed, four walls and Anna. She said, "Good morning!" And her voice was in complete harmony

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with the general look of her—her way of walking, her body, her mouth.

All the lines of her body were to be seen as she put down the milk pot, bent forward because she had the paper bag full of rolls under the same arm.

She made the table ready with every attention, as though for a meal between friends, took note of the effect, and then put two paper squares into folds with great care. All the time a man was by the window looking on.

The strange feeling of the night before had gone. Anna was quite changed, as though in her night's sleep she had become certain that she was ready for living.

Carl's eyes were on her wherever she went ; and when she made an attempt to get by him to take down a bottle of fruit he had no words in which to put his love and no time for words.

Wave after wave of feeling went through her body while his arms were round her, like a tree in the face of the wind.

With her arm round his neck, she let herself down on to the seat. "Have your food first!"

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He took note of the promise in her words. She got his bread ready and gave it to him with a quick look. She was unable to take any food herself. Her eyes were on him, her hands resting on her knees.

"What delicate little hands you have !  
Like a Society woman!"

She got up, feeling self-conscious, and went over to the window.

Slowly he went to her, feeling her attraction. There was something troubled about her parted lips ; at the same time they said 'yes'. He put his arm slowly round her. They were together in one another's arms, not moving. And when, lifting his eyes, he saw her lips open, waiting for him, and took them again and again, no word was said.

The thin material was tightly buttoned over her body. He got it loose.

With a quiet little smile she let down her dress, and came into his arms. The sunlight was full on the white linen of the bed.

Carl gave a pull at the band of his trousers and took a step back, deeply

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conscious of the value of doors, doors with a lock, and a key able to be turned.

Then he was before her again, where she was stretched out in the sun, and he was certain that there was no feeling on earth so happy as that of being without doubt of his loved one and that she would give herself to him.

He made no move, happy in the knowledge of what was to come. And at last overcome by the look in his eyes, she came up suddenly and took him to herself.

The building was formed of six broken-down houses, making one dead, grey group, and going round three squares. There were more than a hundred workmen's families living there, ruled by the chances of war, by reason of which they all went through the same sad times, put up with the same need of food and clothing, the same bread, and the same diseases.

Here and there there was a crying of babies, like the noise made by frogs in the thick, green water; sometimes they would all make a noise together for a minute or two. On that Sunday morning,

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their crying was done to music brightly played on mouth-instruments.

A school-girl got out of bed with a jump, came to the open window, put her finger on a loud-sounding bell fixed on her window-shelf and put her hand to her ear.

A minute later a school-girl, in her night-dress, was to be seen at the window opposite. She put her finger on a bell of the same sort, and like the other girl, made her hand into a telephone ear-piece.

“Elfi here !”

“Good morning, Elfi ! Alma here. Had a good night ?”

“Oh, it’s you, Alma ! How sweet of you to get me on the telephone !”

The friends were on the same floor, and were looking one another in the face while telephoning. The square was only eighteen feet across.

“What are you going to put on to-day, Alma ? I will put on my blue.”

“I had an idea you would. I will probably put on my yellow.”

They had only one Sunday dress. But sometimes, to make it seem as though they had more, they put on one another’s.

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"We might go to the moving pictures to-night. . . . What a disgusting noise in the wires."

In a fourth-floor room, lived in by a friend of Anna's (two or three times she had made an attempt to get Anna's attention in a loud voice, but without result), a polished black circle, with a picture of a dog in front of a horn, was playing a piece of military music, to the sound of which millions had gone to the war.

"What disgusting noises ! I am going to put up the ear-piece. I'll get you again later." Elfi put her finger on the bell. The high voice of Alma's bell came in answer, louder than the military music. The girls went in.

Far down, on a stone square, a white-haired boy of four was to be seen. He was crying out to the sky in a loud voice :

"*Mariechen has a baby,  
It hasn't got a father !*"

Someone made a noise at the door. Anna got quickly up in bed, her hand to her heart. The newspaper came through the letter-box.

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"In the old days you were different, Anna. You were less free with yourself." He was on his back, deep in thought, full of the idea of how much less free Anna had been in her behaviour to him before. "Has it gone from your mind, the reason you gave every time, before you—before all was well? And your position was different." Almost unconsciously she went farther from him, and gave him a long look. It was so strange, his knowledge, which took in the most private of all her ways. Her face was wide with surprise, and suddenly without any sign of thought, as if the power of thought had been cut out of her with a knife.

"Quite different!" With a soft push he put her right leg in another position and gave her right arm a pull in his direction.

"Like that!"

Her head went back by itself. In this position, which had so frequently been hers, all her past existence with Richard suddenly came before her. In giving herself to him she said his name under her breath, certain at last that the

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man in her arms was Richard. For her, in that minute, past and present were formed into the same current of being and became one.

In the hours that came after, Anna had need of all her inner force to keep her belief that Carl was Richard. And she made the discovery that, though one may not have the power of building up a belief by force, it is possible to keep out a troubling thought.

Somewhere inside her, a little higher than her stomach, was, as it were, the muscle which had to be worked all the time to keep out the over-conscious idea that Carl was not Richard.

Carl, completely taken up with his love for her, was untouched by any such doubts. While he quietly gave her his kisses and, overcome with pleasure, took hers, his thoughts were at work on the question of how, by industry and the use of all his powers, it would be possible to make the money which would keep him and Anna from need.

Richard had taken work for one week —from the day he came to the town to the

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day the war was started—in the machine-works of Kipp and Gräf, and had not been pleased with the money they gave him.

Carl said to Anna, while she was dressing, that he would not go for work to Kipp and Gräf's; they were a poor company, he said, and gave little money.

A cold feeling went through her body as a memory came back to her mind. It quickly went. It seemed all the time as if she was floating in air: a condition which was all feeling, and so smooth and pleasing that, now as before, the damaging thought was unable to make its way in.

As she went down on her way to get one or two more things for their meal in the middle of the day, the steps seemed changed. The details were the same, but there was something strangely different about them. A change had come over the woman who was going down the steps.

Then came the street, with the bright sun, the different air, the clean, morning air. Men and women were moving up and down the side-walks. A little old woman came by, walking with unequal steps, a basket on her arm; boys and

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girls were talking loudly to one another in play. A meat cart came by and was quickly gone.

Two workmen in Sunday shirts, without their coats, were talking outside their door. She had to go to the store and give the man her order for meat. It had to be worked out. She had to see to it that the meat would do for two. Thought was necessary. Feeling gave place to thought. The weight of her body was pulled down. Her head came up, clear and free.

"No, that will not do. Give me another quarter of a pound," she said to the store-keeper.

For there was a man up in her room. There was his need for food in addition to hers. Someone had come. Someone had come.

Yes, but there was such a great distance between her and this person. What had the man up there in her room to do with her? He had come yesterday. She had gone on from day to day for four years, by herself. And then, yesterday, a strange man had come.

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And that morning? What had taken place? Taken place with her, that morning? "And give me a bone, to make some soup." How had it been possible? A strange man. That was—not to be talked of. She gave a look round, in surprise and pain.

On the way back she came across a friend, who was feeling very sad because the prices of fat and bread-grain were higher. Anna was pained and troubled.

"Yes; how much will that be on the week's house-keeping accounts?" Her friend got the amount worked out.

Anna was in fear of going back. He was there. She would be so pleased if, when she went home, nobody was there. She had a great desire to be by herself, to get things straight. To get things straight. What was her right behaviour now? What would come of it all?

Anna's experience was not different from that of a great number of women, who, when they go from the place where they have been making love and come into the street, the different air, the side-walks full of persons going up and down, suddenly

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come to their senses and are surprised at what they have done.

She went up the steps with all the feelings of a married woman when she comes back to her house after she has been with another man.

On the first floor she came to a stop. A man comes out of space, out of space which is as great as . . . comes out of space to me, in my room, and has knowledge of all my past existence. Greater than I have myself. Before I took off my dress (how was I able to do that !) he had said where the three birth-marks were on my body. Comes suddenly to me and puts me in memory of things which had gone from my mind completely. All the time Anna's eyes were fixed on the design on the wall at the side of the steps.

She would have been happier to go up another two floors to her friend. There everything was safe and unchanged ; as in the four years. Give her all the story. She might have an idea what to do. But in her room a man's white shirt was hanging over the back of the seat. Everything out of order. . . . What would he be

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doing when she went in? Where would he be? By the window? It was quite true: the curtains *were* new. And when they had got the others—the old ones, she and Richard—Richard who was dead, had been dead four years. Yes, there was no doubt that he was dead!—the store-keeper had said, “They are cheap at the price.” He had said, word for word: “They are cheap at the price.” The store-keeper had had black hair on his upper lip, cut very short, and two small lumps on his head, between his eyes and hair. They had been pointed out to her by Richard.

We became friends only yesterday. He has no right to make use of the name Anna, was her thought before, turning the hand-piece, she got the door open.

He is playing a false part. Playing a false part! . . . And I did that with him! She was angry, disgusted, burning at the thought of it.

He had taken the bed-covers from the day-bed, and it was pushed against the wall. The table that had been used for the early meal was clear. And Anna’s

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bed had been made, though badly, not smoothly and well. The room was all clean and straight. As she came in, Carl was going over the floor for a second time with the long brush, taking up the last little grains of dust.

The thought came to her that Richard had sometimes done that—the housework. But he had not ever seemed so happy about it.

She was no longer angry, disgusted, and pained at having given herself to a man who was being false with her, when she saw Carl there in front of her, resting on the hand-piece of the brush, like a true roadman stopping in his work to have a quiet talk with some one in the street.

Her thoughts went back to the kisses of the morning, and it was Richard, only Richard, to whom she had given herself. But the man there, resting on the brush, was not Richard. The division between Richard and Carl, between the past and the present, was clear. It was no longer possible not to be conscious of it.

For years she had not seen Richard so clearly as she saw him now. He was quite

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different from Carl—slower in mind and body—and he had not ever said such things as Carl had said the day before. He had said that there was no one, who would not take a piece of grass in his mouth when on his back in a field. Richard had been a quiet man, he gave one a feeling of being safe—(generally a short black growth on his face); and he was a little stiff from his hard work. His hands were not for ever on one, like this man's. This man was like a—a tight spring. He had it in his power to be sharp and violent ; that was clear from her short experience of him.

The event of the morning had made her past with Richard come back to her as nothing had done before, and it was between them making a division.

Why had she been so foolish, when they were in bed, as to have the belief for a second that this man was Richard ? Her Richard. . . . But, after all, she had been in bed with him. It had been his arms, *his* arms, and his mouth. And he was not strange to her, and not unpleasing. Not now, though she had come to her

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senses. Strange. And the thought of what she had done would not be so bad, not so very bad, if only he would not go on saying that he was Richard.

"What are you doing there? That's no work for you!"

"Why do you say things in that way?"

She gave her head a sharp turn in the other direction, her mouth moving angrily.

"If you ever say again that you are married to me! Is that clear? If you ever say that again!" She was so angry that her eyes were wet.

"But you said it yourself this morning. You said yourself that I was married to you. You gave me the name of Richard.... We are for one another, you and I!"

"We are not for one another at all. I have not seen you before. You came only yesterday. . . . Richard may be living. He may be living. You said so yourself. He may come back."

"Well, and what then? What if he does come back? What effect would that have?" A sudden, violent look came into his eyes. They became deep and black. His lips were tight, but his

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voice was not loud. "It has nothing to do with me who comes, or if nobody comes. We are for one another."

His muscles became loose again. The lines of his face became soft. "It has to be, Anna. It has to be," he said again, and in his smile and his voice there was as before the deep quiet of a man who is certain.

Carl had a well-formed nose, strong arms, and eyes full of thought.

Anna was almost laughing: he was looking so foolish. In the heat of the argument he had got up on his toes, and only by a tight grip of the hand-piece of the brush was he able to keep his balance. Again the force and power of his feeling had made it no longer possible for her to have doubt of him. His violent impulses, kept in control only by the power of his brain, had made her grey eyes wide with surprise.

It was not a thought, but a sort of unconscious feeling, half-angry, half desiring, and in part the impulse not to give in, which gave her the knowledge that he might overcome the past which he

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himself had made so living, if only he would give up the fiction that he was Richard, the fiction that he himself was that past.

No, this will not do, what he's making me put up with. "How foolish!" unconsciously she put her thought into words. She was seated by the window, with the basin on her knees, her fingers hard at work cleaning and cutting up the carrots. Changing her position, she gave the basin an angry push, and let off her feelings on the carrots.

While she was working there was no look of interest on her face. It was as though her thoughts were about nothing at all. But the way she got up, brushing the carrots from her dress, and took the basin to the gas-cooker, her way of moving her body—all was different from the motions she would have made if she had been by herself, or if she had taken no interest in the man seated at her back on the day-bed.

He was seated there, his body bent forward, his head on his hands, full of decisions which it was not possible to

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put into force by power of muscle or by strong desire. He was on the point of getting up angrily and making his request : “ . . . and if you will not, I’ll take to the road again ! ”

But he had been on the road ; had the memory of it in his legs ; was conscious how little he had been able to make of himself without love.

One day he had said to Richard : “ A man keeps putting the question to himself, how is it possible to go on in this way ? keeps putting the question and is able to get no answer, no answer at all. Like a worm that has to go a hundred thousand miles across hot sand. That’s it—a worm without earth ! That’s my existence ! ”

Though Carl was a man of force, with a driving power that would have done for ten, he was in need of someone to be dependent on.

He made no move. It was clear to him that if he went off he would come back the day after. His way of going on with a thing to the end, his force of mind which made him able to give effect to his

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purpose, kept down the wave of angry feeling which came up again and again in throat and neck.

Without turning her head she said suddenly : "No doubt you have full knowledge of what I said to my friend when the news came of Richard's death ? No doubt you have full knowledge of everything I did before I was married, as a girl, or as a baby ?" And, she was so angry that she would have been pleased to go on : Or before my birth ?

To which he made answer slowly and with weight : "No, I don't. But I do see what sort of little girl you were. Not very open about your feelings ; but not sad like other girls and boys. You didn't get tired and angry when your mother was doing your hair. You were able to go on waiting for things, and you were brightly happy without being consicous of it. I have an idea that your development was like that of an apple, which just keeps on increasing in size."

Only then did he take his head out of his hands. "All the time I've had the feeling of a deep need for something. Probably

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you were not ever conscious of that sort of deep need. Possibly you are not conscious of it now."

So it came about that through the words of another, whose love made all things clear, Anna saw for the first time a picture of the days when she was a girl. It made her warm and happy.

While he was talking her hands became quiet. "What are you saying?" Deeply moved, she put the question.

My feelings being what they are, he was saying to himself, only two things are possible : I have her love, or it's all over.

"As for what you said to your friend when the news came—the false news—it was hard for you, as it is for any woman. It gives you a tight feeling across the heart. . . . But I see into your mind ; it did not seem possible that this blow would come to you, or that it would come at all. You're like a shaking leaf and you have the look of one. Probably, you were not ever completely certain, though you may have seemed to be so. And then the time came for you as for the others, when you had to go on living from

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day to day, living for nothing, nothing at all. All the time you have a deep need, a deep need, simply for someone ! I've been through it. . . . Have *you*? Have you been through it?"

Anna had not ever been conscious that her relations with Richard were not complete. It had not ever seemed to her that he had a wrong idea of her ; but she had not at any time been conscious that he had full knowledge of her. Their talk had not ever been of anything but the cares of the day. And now, though Carl was in front of her, she did not make a comparison between the two men. She was rooted to the floor, conscious of nothing but disgust with herself because it had been in her mind that he was being false with her.

Two or three times, by a word, a look, a note in Carl's voice, something was touched in Anna which had till now been latent. She had had a ~~feeling~~, from the night before, that in her there were wide stretches of country waiting for discovery. For some minutes she went through a new and deeply pleasing experience. But

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she was naturally a slow-moving person. It was not possible for her to go forward by sudden jumps. There was nothing false about her ; she was true to herself in her way of living, breathing, and acting. The connection between her existence in the present and her past with Richard was suddenly broken. Her growth had taken her on a step. The past had become unimportant and was no longer living.

As time went on, Carl had to make the discovery that being true to a person may be nothing more than waiting.

Suddenly pained by this past existence, which had been forced back into her like something from outside which was no part of her, it became necessary to keep Carl from coming near, though, at the back of the need, the desire to give way to him was becoming stronger and more full of fire. She was like a troubled sleeper without control or power of motion.

By saying he was Richard, Carl had given to the past that living force which is a property of one's earliest memories. But, with the feelings that he had, any

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other behaviour would have been false. The woman who had at one time been living with another man was not his Anna. He, and nobody but he, had been one with her from the start. For him his fiction was true, and the true false.

Every night, when he came back from looking for work, he was unable to take any step because of the wall which he had himself put up, and which it was not possible to take down without doing damage to his feeling. They had come to a level where the spring of existence was dry, where no current of feeling, no thought-producing argument, no physical relation was possible.

Through these weeks she made him come and go from the house quietly and secretly. The knowledge was kept from everyone that he was sleeping in her room.

## IV

Anna's friend, Marie, was living with her sister, and had a fourth-floor room overlooking the second of the three squares. The room was no longer than the narrow

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iron bed which took up every inch of space between the inside wall and the window.

By the window the room was a little wider. An iron frame was placed there, with three iron legs and a wash-basin. There was no space for seat or table. When Marie had her wash in the morning, she had to get down on her knees on the bed to get her face into the water. One Sunday, after the middle meal of the day, Anna was seated on the foot of the bed and Marie was undressed in front of her, getting ready to put on her things for a walk.

In the greater room joining hers, the man who was living with Marie's sister—the man she was married to was at the war—was sleeping on the brown cushion-seat. The sister's two sons, one was eight and the other nine, were deep in thought in front of an old baby-cart in which their brother of six months—the son of the sleeping man—was resting with his small hands pushed against his face. Their discussion was on the question how to get a cart for themselves for the day.

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"It's only necessary to take off the body," said the older boy, who had a screw-driver in his hand; "then we will take the wheel part."

"But do it quietly or he will make a noise."

They took out the eight screws, got the upper part lifted off on to the floor with the baby inside it, almost awake now, and went quietly out of the room with the framework and wheels. "We'll put the body on again to-night. . . . There's he's starting to make a noise!"

Then the man came out of his sleep—he was an automobile worker—and gave one look round for the baby-cart. There was nothing in the place where it had been. But, without any doubt, there was a baby crying in the room. He gave his eyes a rub, and looking down, troubled and only half awake, saw his son. A second or two later he was smilingly taking him up and down in his arms.

It had come about by itself, by force of events. He had taken a sleeping place—the bed of the man who was at the war. At first the table had been between the

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two beds, marking the limits. For the first week the light was turned out when they went to bed. For the money he would have given for a poor meal in a cheap restaurant, the woman got food for all the family, and there was no money for their support. The two beds were placed side by side again.

The woman came to the doorway, her over-dress wet from washing and a rubbing-brush in her hand. "Has he been crying?" Her face was grey, the skin unelastic. But the red lips were smooth and tight and full of blood, and being open, seemed of the same quality as her wide-open questioning eyes. She was older than the automobile worker.

"Have a look at that!" he said, his face bright again, and pointing with his finger.

"That's what the two bad boys were talking about in bed last night." She put the baby to her and gave it milk. Her milk-vessels, which were surprisingly young, were white and small, and had sky-blue markings.

The machine-worker, his hands in his

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trousers-pockets, made no move, looking with great attention at his son's lips pulling at the milk, and at the way he put it down his throat.

In a day or two's time, it was said, the other man would be back for a rest.

The other little room was full of the sound of Marie laughing. She was in the same position on the bed as before, and was putting on, with Anna's help and in the light of her opinion, a short under-garment which she had made herself in the morning.

Without moving she put on her stockings. Her leg from the small foot to the knee was delicate, girl-like, well-formed. But after the deep mark of the stocking band, the woman was to be seen : the lines of the body became soft, rolling curves ; the skin was darker in colour and in places it was rough.

The middle band of her little trousers, which were ornamented with open-work machine-stitching of a rough design went deeply into her skin, and from the band up was to be seen the thin, very delicate, unexperienced back of a young girl.

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Anna gave her a cotton dress with blue rounds on it. And when her head and arms had gone from view under the dress she went on with the story of what had been going on in the house between then and the time she and Anna had last been together. First came the short, outstretched fingers, with their short wide nails, then the solid, very narrow head, all of the same warm colour, as if made of some strange wood, the good-looking eyes. The hair about her eyes was of a deeper colour than her sweet-smelling gold hair. She had little hollows that came and went in her tight, smooth face, coming every time in such a living, pleasing way, when her little mouth would have it so.

She let herself go back, stiffly, her body outstretched and then, suddenly full of the pleasure of living, gave a roll on to her side as the cushions came back into place, and put her head on Anna's knees. Anna quietly put her hands to the girl's warm face.

The noise of someone using their voice with all the force of strong lungs came from

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a room on the street level. The sound came against the walls with a shock, and was sent rolling up the narrow square, by the fourth-floor windows, to the sky. Again an outburst for the space of a breath. Then a woman's voice getting higher.

"There, he's come to blows with her again." Marie had got up quickly. "There is trouble between them every day, but they will not be parted."

The woman who was getting the blows had taken up with another man while the man she was married to was at the war. A great number of women did it. And no one kept a secret. Marie was able to go on for hours with the story of the hate, the sad hearts, the disease and crime, the pain undergone by persons who had done no wrong, and on the other hand, of the loving care and unquestioning support which were housed in the building.

It would be the same with me, was Anna's thought; you take another man because the man you are married to is not there or has gone from you. It goes on every day.

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On the second floor, Carl was facing the street window, unmoving as a prisoner who is learning the art of waiting.

"And what if when your man comes back and sees what we've been doing, everything gets smashed to pieces?" said the automobile worker in the other room.

A group had got together in an angle of the square: half-dressed boys and girls, with no colour in their faces and ill with lung-trouble, women dressed in old pieces, men without coats on. Blue, cold faces. They had taken out into the air an old man, feeble for need of food, who had become unconscious.

A strong young workman was in the middle of the square, in the position of an archer, his body bent back almost at a right angle. With all his force he gave a pull at the string, curving his rod of thin, flat steel, five feet long and almost straight, into a half-circle. The instrument he was sending, a long piece of covered steel piping, thin as a hollow stick by the river, went straight up into the space of the summer sky, made a

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slow turn, bright in the sun, and came down again into the narrow, black-looking square. An instrument of danger when used by strong hands out of control, which, as it comes back to earth may do damage to the archer himself.

He sent it up again and again. All eyes were fixed on the sky. The group went nearer together ; a grey, shade-like group. All were looking up, the old man who was feeble for need of food, among them.

The sound of the bell made Elfi come to the window. "Frau Anna has got a man to see her. He is down there. . . Had a good meal?"

"Yes ; carrots."

"Oh, carrots?"

A short time after, dressed up in their coloured garments they went walking happily arm in arm down the road up which Carl had come so slowly weeks before. Their legs were long, with no curving muscle to them, as thin as sticks, and they had bright green silk bands in their hair ; two little water-birds.

And Marie at her window had been

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looking down, Carl was there at the window as before, not moving. "I say, who's the man in your room? . . . Who is he, Anna?"

Anna said nothing for so long that it became an answer. She was serious and troubled. And like that she went out of the room.

There would be someone there, when she went down. Not a person who was strange to her. Such an hour as that on their first morning, makes men and women come near to one another. Very near. It keeps them together. Someone would be there when she went in. And that would be comforting. The room would not be so—so in order and free from things as it was before. . . . Was Richard living? He said that he was Richard, and in a way that almost made her have belief. It was necessary for her to get him out of saying that, of foolishly saying that.

She would get the better of him. She would be quicker than he.

Yes, but what if Richard were not dead, after all? What then? What

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if he was living? . . . Then none of it was possible. It was not right to go from the man who had given one his name, without saying any more about it, and go off with another man. It was not so simple as all that. . . . All that was necessary was to keep the picture of him in her mind—his eyes, his way of looking at her. And his great hand, so true. Yes, and the complete belief she had in him. With him she had been safe and kept from danger. That was true. Safe, completely safe!

"What about going for a walk?"

"Yes," said Carl slowly, looking down at his garments.

"You may put on one of Richard's white collars."

"I have no need of anything. Not a thing!"

Only me. He'll take nothing from him but me. "You say he's living but you would have me married to you!"

"That wouldn't make anything different for me," he said with a black look. And suddenly, in connection with nothing at all, and in such a way that she was

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certain he had been giving thought to it while she was out of the room and come to a decision to say it: "The store-keeper who said those curtains were cheap had very short black hair on his lip—only that size—and he had two little lumps on the upper part of his face, if you are interested. They were pointed out to you at the time."

An angry feeling went through her; it was so unnecessary. "I have no idea where you got all that from. I'm angry with you! It's disgusting what you're doing—disgusting!" His face muscles became stiff. It seemed as if he had no power to do anything, a feeling such as a man has only when the very greatest wrong has been done him. The faces of a number of the persons in the road, dead Sunday faces, were touched for a second or two with interest, as they saw these two; Anna, moving so well, long-legged, so sweet and strong, and at her side, the black-haired, uncared-for man, without a collar, full of fire like a burning coal bright under a thin coating of grey.

They were walking in the direction of

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the town. It was the first time they had been out together. What an event for him, who had gone on foot for three months, through woods, from one country to another, to get to her! Now he was walking by her side.

He let her go forward two or three steps, to see her way of walking, and the picture he had had of her, far off there in the steppe came back to him. She had come to him then in a light dress of smooth, dark material, like a dead woman coming back to her lover, stepping without substance down their old walk under the trees. The colour went from his face, so strong was the sudden feeling which overcame him.

I'll go through years of waiting, if necessary, he said to himself, and was unhappy at waiting a minute.

Turning round, on her face the look of a person naturally wise, in her eyes the suggestion of warm, deep power, well in control, she suddenly had a sense, delicate like the blue of air, of having at some time been with him before, experiencing the same feelings as now.

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"Is it possible—"

Her sense was clear to him. His desire and his feelings, had ever been circling round the same point. "It is so."

"—That I've been here with you before?"

They went into a road lined with trees, which went from their group of streets to the town: the road in his picture. "You were here before under the trees: it was night-time and you were waiting for me."

Richard had not ever said that. But he was certain it was true. He had seen Anna walking and waiting. The knowledge was in him, and he had put it into words.

Down all her left side, which was near him, Anna had a warm soft feeling.

Things as they are, with all their limiting conditions had gone from view. Feelings from deep down inside them, came into conscious existence. Their hearts were at one.

Anna kept out thought. She had complete belief in her feeling. And so that it might be tasted to the full, she had to give words to her feeling, she had to say

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the name. And she said it : "Richard." He made the secret circle complete ; he said simply : " You are my love." And so they went.

" And the baby ? Now have you a desire for it ? Now have you a desire for one ? "

As her lips were opened to him, her eyes became shut. But she was a woman slow in moving.

He put the question again with his lips against hers. With the deep comfort of her answer in his heart, though she had not put it into words, he went into the garden of the beer-house with his tall woman, the woman who was married to him.

Had he not been there some time before, as a boy ? And the owner's daughter, yes, Anna, with her arm round his neck, had given the glass of milk a push in his direction.

Seated under a tree in a part of the garden which they had almost to themselves, they were for a time very near one another, as though events had not ever made Anna and Richard come together,

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as though chance acting in a million different ways, which makes possible errors which are ended only by death and is the designer of complete existences, had been quite overcome by the force and desire of two hearts, hearing strongly again one another's beats, as though it had been like this from the start of things.

A workman's family came to the table near by. Before seating herself, the woman quickly took out the food she had with her, and the four little ones, their noses coming only a little higher than the table edge, made a noise like a number of small birds desiring their food, when the mother-bird comes down on the edge of their resting place. And so outside existence came again into view.

Anna's head was full of thoughts again. But the event that comes to one among thousands had come to her : she was in love. She was in the power of that need which will not be put on one side, whose roots are deeper than the reason, and which is not dependent on events, or on the look, the general behaviour, the spec-

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ial qualities of the loved one ; which is there or not there ; which has the weight of lead and as little substance as a smell ; smaller than a pin-point and as great as the earth, with the power of lifting a man into the highest pleasure or sending him into such deep pain of feeling, and making him so without hope that a rat seems happier than he. The strange thing, the secret of which is kept from man, was unfolded within her.

There was music with brass instruments at eight. The garden was full by then. Everyone came in time. Carl saw that persons seated round about were looking at them. But the relation between Anna and himself had got to the stage where the harmony was deep and complete. Carl had gone through all the first stages, among them that of being pleased at being seen about with a woman so much to be desired. It was no longer possible for them to be touched by outside conditions of any sort. With so much going on round them, all their attention was taken up in the fight against and for one another, in which pain was

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given and everything put right again with a look.

A little old man, bent almost to the earth with the weight of his years, was floating from table to table under his red, blue and green cloud of rubber air balls, like the small, black box of an airship.

They went back down the road lined with trees, which seemed full of the memory of their earlier experience. It was in their thoughts. They went slowly and without saying anything: two persons given to one another.

Anna made a fight. It had come upon her so quickly. And nothing had been made clear. Being in the dark made her unhappy. But suddenly with a sharp force stronger than herself, she had been gripped by a feeling which for minutes together made her able, under a violent impulse to let go all that had been before, and have complete belief in Carl.

As they went through the great door, the two young birds put their heads together and said something in a low voice. Their faces and arms were burned

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by the sun—Elfi had on the yellow now, and Alma the blue. They had put on one another's dresses by the water's edge.

"You're a happy woman, Frau Anna ; I am so pleased about it," said a man on the steps, and went on down. "Now and then a man does come back after he has been put down as dead. But not very frequently."

"We had news of it last night," said Elfi loudly.

"Who from ?" said the man, who was now one floor down, and the answer came to Anna's ears :

"From old Bösch."

She was an old woman who was in touch with all that went on in the building, and took her stories to anyone who would give her an ear.

And what now ? was Anna's thought. And suddenly she was in the arms of her friend, feeling the wet on Marie's face. "Why didn't you say anything to me about it? All the house had the news of it but me ! You are a one for keeping secrets ! Let me see him . . .

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Herr Richard, come and be seen quickly.”  
It was dark on the steps.

“ Well, and what now?”

“ How happy I am!”

And Anna herself was happy. What a weight of pleasure, was her thought. A weight of pleasure! Full of the sense of it, she went to the door, got it open and put a light to the lamp.

It would have been possible for her to say that Carl was not Richard, that she had a lover. There was nothing in that to make a secret of. It was taken quite naturally by those living in the building that women whose men were at the war had relations with other men.

And it would have been possible for her to say, without fear of her words seeming false, that Carl was Richard. For in those eight days—from the time of their coming to the town to the start of the war—Richard had made friends with nobody, had not so much as said a word to the persons living nearest them. And four years had gone by.

But it was not these reasons, though for a second she took note of them, that

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made her come to a decision, but her desire and the experience which she had gone through with Carl.

The question of his being Richard or not was no longer important. She was certain he was not being false. And her feelings and experience had not been false. She was truly and completely happy. Let them all take the view that he was Richard if he and events would have it so. And as for herself, was it not her desire?

There he was, in the room, and he gave Marie his hand, quite untroubled. Quite untroubled, with his happy face.

Oh, it was her desire, not only his ! It was her desire ! It was her desire ! . . . This violent man who was able to be as quiet as the plant there on the window-shelf. Because he was so happy and was no longer by himself . . . No longer by himself ! How good that was ! How deeply, deeply good ? . . . Marie's bright face, truly, she was laughing and crying with pleasure at the same time. Existence was good after all. Only it had gone by her for so long.

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In place of the angry discussion, loud with a number of voices, of the earlier part of the day, the quiet of the square seemed to come up and in at their window. Strange notes were being made, thin and feeble. Two music players of the buildings were getting their instruments, ready. They were instruments made by themselves : a piano, made of a wood box, one foot eight inches long with black and white painted keys—and a *violin* made from an old box which had been used for Havanas.

One put the delicate little piano on to a seat they had with them, and with great care got it into position so that it would be safe and not come to pieces ; the other slowly got his violin turned over—it had a neck like a *cello*—and with great care let the neck come to rest against the seat. From the sound of it it seemed that equal care was being taken with the ~~music~~.

There was very little room for the great workman's hands and thick fingers of the piano-player on the keys. The two men had to keep the natural power

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of their motions in control, for fear their delicate little instruments would go to pieces while they were playing. So they were forced to make good music. They gave songs with the music. They had the attention of a hundred persons in the buildings. Not a sound. The babies, yes, the babies were quiet. The music came up to the three in Anna's room. The sound was sweet.

When they had done, the white-haired boy of four went on with his song: "*Marichen has a baby—*" He had no control over himself. He was gripped by the music. His voice went up to the sky with all the force of his lungs. He had no knowledge of anything better. His arms and legs were waving, he was so pleased about it. "*It hasn't got a father.*"

## V

The other persons in the building made the position clearer. Carl was, for them, Anna's man. To the boys and girls he was "*Herr Richard*". The store-keepers from whom they got bread, fruit and

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meat, said to Anna how pleased they were that the dead man had come back. The family in the room by the side of theirs would say "Herr Richard" to him morning and night. Marie was "a little in love" with him. "Not so very much." To her he was Richard. To all the others he was Herr Richard. Anna herself made use of the name Richard. And she not only made use of the name, but little by little it became natural, part of her feeling for him.

There was no longer any need for her to go to the works. Carl had got work. Every Saturday his money was handed over to the last pfennig. Then, it was his way to make his belt tighter and put out his hand like a boy, for her to give him his pocket-money.

Anna's bed was wide ; there was room for two. His place was by the wall. She got up quietly in the morning and made the early meal. As it had been in the past.

She had kept the promise which she had not put into words : she was in her third month.

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He would not let her do any lifting or moving. After his work he went up and down the steps, got the wood and coal and potatoes, and gave the floor a wash.

There are persons who become and keep good, so long as things go well with them ; and women who become strangely good to look at when they are happily in love, who have ever in their eyes and faces a bright flame, deeply burning, so that no one goes by them in the street without seeing and being conscious of it.

A hundred times a day there was a song in Anna's heart—when she saw her man, when her thoughts were on him, when the memory came to her of something he had said, a look he had given her, the fact that she was going to have his baby. Her days were a song.

His feeling for her was violent, and at the same time kind and full of care, like the love of a mother. In the house, in the street, in the works, on the way there and back, he saw and was conscious only of Anna. His existence was Anna. The form of Anna was in his blood. He was quiet with it all : he had her love.

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At night he was at work on the last stages of a little invention—an apparatus for the better operation of a turner's machine—it had been tested, and he had made two or three hundred marks out of it. For the baby that was coming.

On his way back at night, the thought that Anna would be there was like a stretch of clear blue water within him. He was conscious of this all the time. And when she was not there, when she was not in the room, she was not the less present. She was there in the way a glass was by the gas-cooker, the way a pot was hanging, the way her stitching-basket was on the window-shelf.

When she came in, he made no motion, but his eyes were on her everywhere she went. When the loose hair about her face was moved by a breath of air, he was happy. She was conscious of it all. When she was getting the meal ready, she put her hand softly on his head and arm as she went by.

“Where have you been, Anna?”

It was like music when she said with

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the voice that was so much in harmony with herself :

" I've been to the shoemaker's. In my opinion he'll do your boots well, Richard."

That seemed to him as though she had said : " My love for you is dearer than existence itself." His love for her was a thousand times greater than his love of existence. Till the time he came back, existence for him had been one long unrest, full of the pain of living only for himself, cared for by no one.

What made these two different from those round them, and put them on a higher level, was that they were conscious that they were happy. Out of this had come the present, with its deep feeling, its inner love, made conscious by a look.

Their experience of the physical, the kisses of the night, was in harmony with the inner light of their love. And for them there came no parting. Their coming together made clear the secret of existence and took them to its highest point.

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In the light of such love the smallest details were important. A narrow fold of her cotton dress, from which the colour had been taken out by the sun, giving the outline of the lower part of her body, had in it for him the measure of his love.

They did not say much. They were not great talkers. They had the full, serious heartbeat of living, the step weighted with purpose, the bright face. They had so much.

Anna, who had a place for everything, would sometimes put her stitching from her, dropping it on the floor. And they would get up together. "Aha, let's go out!"

The town was theirs with its men and women, the fields round it, the air, the woods, because they had one another.

After one of their walks, which had taken them by the chief railway line—the straight supports of the electric-wires, stretching out into the distance had some strange attraction for them—Marie came to their room, crying.

Her sister's man had come back for a

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rest from the war, had taken a long look at the automobile worker's little son, been given her sister's story, and without saying a word in answer, had gone out of the door and taken a train straight back to the Front.

The three were seated at the table under the light. Marie was crying. She put out her hand. Anna took the linen cloth from her pocket and gave it her.

"We had no idea he would take it like that." Anna gave Carl a look, and then Marie.

"What was the right thing for him to do?" Her heart was in her throat. She put the question to herself, why?

"She was married to him."

"When Frau Mozer's man came back, the man she was living with—Fritz—went off. Which was right. Or take Herr Häuslar. He has been back three weeks, but the man from the post office is living with them till he is able to get another room. "They are all three living together in the one room," said Marie, going on crying.

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"But Herr Leinert was so violent that his woman was almost dead when he had done with her. And now they are parted. It is more serious than you make it seem, Marie, more serious."

"It is in part our way of living, our way of living is part of the trouble. . . . But he'll come back. And I will put my arms round his neck, Anna. I will!"

"All three are living together, you say, all three in one room?" She was looking at him. So far he had not said a word. His eyes were not in the room. Why were her heart-beats so quick?

"I will put my arms round his neck. And then he will be kind as before." Her sweet face was smiling again. The little hollows came back.

"Richard, I'm going to make some coffee. May I, Anna?"

So frequently Marie was the one to be laughing again before the others had got over being sad, or she was crying when the others were laughing with amusement at something which was said. Her reaction to events was quick and violent. And as quickly, her bright humour came back,

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like a cork that goes up and down with every wave, but comes safe through the worst weather.

His eyes were in the steppe between Europe and Asia. Anna put her hand on her throat where her heart-beats were so quick.

A small grip-apparatus was screwed to the window-shelf. He did the rough work, for which a turner's machine was needed, in the works, but the rubbing down and forming he did in the room at night. He was making the full-size design from which the others would be copied. It was smaller than a boy's hand when it is shut.

From the way he at last got up, put out the parts of his design on the window-shelf, made a selection from his instruments and got started on the work, Anna was certain that he would give in only to death.

A little cold feeling went through them. It seemed to them they were brushed by the wings of chance. And resting that night, they were at one in their hearts, kept together by a power which

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was able to give them living force or death, but not to make a division between them. Then had no thought of wrong-doing.

Eight days later Marie's sister had news from the authorities of the death of her man six days before.

A number of persons living in the building, who had said no unkind word about her before, were ready now to say things against her. Cruel things were said about her in a loud voice when she went out. She had sent her man to his death. She got angry letters. The automobile worker, conscious of the wrong he had done, kept his eyes stiffly in front of him when he went across the square, morning and night. Up in their room they said only what was necessary. The woman did her work. Some weeks have to go by after such a sad event, before normal existence is possible again.

In a short time the persons living round about were again making a friendly motion of the head when they went by the automobile-worker on the steps, and only from time to time was it pointed out to Marie's

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sister what sort of a woman she was ; for example when she put forward her right to the wash-house, the use of which had ever been a cause of trouble between the different groups.

The war between the two boys and the other boys and girls went on longer. Two or three times a day they would have a fight on their mother's account because of the cry which came from every door and angle of the square :

“ Your mother is a bad woman ! ”

Anna was by the open drawer. She had been resting on the day-bed, had suddenly got up and gone to the drawer, and was waiting there, looking in, not certain why.

But when she took the old post card in her hand, on which the military authorities had sent her the news four years before of Richard's death, a sudden burning pain went through her body. She was reading automatically.

But he may be in now any minute, was her thought and the feeling of quiet and rest came down on her like rain on a warm day. “ No doubt you have

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knowledge of everything I did before I was married, as a girl, or as a baby?"

It was quite clear in her memory the time she had said that. . . . Yes, he had knowledge of everything. More complete than any other person on earth, more complete than she had had about herself. And all because his love for her was so great. Her only desire was for him; all her days only him. Nothing but that was possible, nothing but that was to be given a thought.

There had been something years and years back in the far-off past. ". . . death at the Front on the 4th September, 1914." This was the only sign of what had been—this post card. Was that true? But he had said the military authorities were wrong. . . . What had they been wrong about? What about? That it was the man she was married to? Or what?

Suddenly she was so tired in her head and legs that she had to put her hand on the edges of the furniture for support in order to get to the day-bed. Dropping on to it, she quickly went to sleep.

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Six went by, and seven. She was in a deep sleep, conscious of nothing, her muscles and legs resting loosely. The postman gave the brass door-piece a little touch, and sent a letter through the hole.

In that hundredth part of a second came the start of her sleep experience, putting an end to her rest as the quiet is put an end to by the first sound of thunder. She got up suddenly, in great fear, and went to the door. On the floor was a letter from Richard. She was not able to take up the letter because it was fixed with four small nails.

Now it's not possible for me to have a look at it. That's a good thing. Not possible to have a look at it. He will have to take the nails out himself. He'll be here any minute. . . . But if he has a look at it everything will be at an end. How cruel! Everything at an end—everything!

She got the nail grippers, went down on her knees, took out three nails, then three more long nails. But there were four nails in the letter as before. That's a good thing! It isn't possible for any-

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one to get that letter unfixed. Certain of that, she went back to the bed to go on sleeping, and came awake.

Yes, it was only in my sleep that the letter was nailed down. It's there on the floor. I was only sleeping—all that it is necessary to do is to go across the room and take it up. She went over to the door, had a look down at the letter, and at the same time saw Richard in front of an unending wall of light, sensed but not seen. "That's a wall of nothing," she said.

Richard had no head, was looking at her with eyes that were not there, and was talking with a mouth that had no substance : "Give me the fork."

She gave him the fork with the one point shorter than the others. Richard was seated at the table, without a head, and cutting his bread into long fingers.

That's only in my sleep again. It's disgusting ; I will not go on with it. I will come awake. Come awake ! I will ! Working with feeble muscles, she got herself free from thick, strong bands of rubber, with a low cry of pain, went in

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two quick steps to the letter, got the cover open, and then, so violent were her feelings, so great the pain in her heart, that she was unable to take in the words.

She was resting as before on the bed, in a deep sleep, her hands under her chin. Richard was seated at the table, without a head. His mouth was working. He was smiling, and looking at her, he said : "Don't be unhappy. I see it all. It had to be like that. Go on with your sleep a little longer."

A great quiet came over her. It seemed as though she was going off to sleep again, and in her sleep she was conscious of the deep pleasure of sleep.

As the letter was dropped on the floor she came awake. The start of it all had been when the postman made a noise on the brass door-piece a tenth of a second earlier, but to that part of her brain which was conscious in sleep it seemed to have gone on for hours.

At the sound, she came out of her sleep, and there came to her ears the noise of the nailed shoes of the postman on the wood steps as he went down. At the

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same minute the memory came to her that in her sleep she had had a letter from Richard.

The vibrations of her heart were stopped. In the belief that she was sleeping as before, she put her hands up to her throat in fear. A letter was on the floor.

The cover had Dutch stamps on it, and was marked with red pencil and the rubber stamps of a number of government authorities, and it had a strong chemical smell. It was open.

Before she was married, Anna had one day had a dream that a letter was sent her by her mother, who was living in a house for old persons, and had not sent word for years. When she came out of her sleep, the letter was there in the box.

Her first impulse was to put the letter into the fire without reading it. She went to the gas-cooker, her feelings dead with fear.

“ Dear Anna—I am not certain so far if I have been taken prisoner by the English or the Japanese. I’m on a ship. They put us in the coal-hole, and it’s very warm, sticky

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work. The other ship went on to a mine yesterday; there were only two bursts of noise, and that was the end of the ship; nothing more to be seen. But there was a smell for hours after. Then we would not ever have seen one another again. To-day we are steaming on again. Through mine fields all the time. We are all of us without news where we are going. I will give this letter to a Dutchman, because they are going to let him go home. If you ever get it, dear old Anna, be certain my love for you is as strong as in the old days, and I would be so happy to be back with you at last in our little room. But the food is good and we do not go short."

The letter had been penned three months before. She became quiet and cold as ice, as a man suddenly becomes quiet in the middle of his shock, when a burst of light in thunder has come before his eyes.

The letter had a strong smell, stronger

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than that of the cover, and she had the feeling of being ill, as though her stomach were full of bad water. She put the letter on the shelf, by the bottles of fruit. It came out a little over the edge. With great care she gave it a push with her first finger, so that the two edges were level.

The child made a move inside her. She had to go down quickly to the store. Richard would be back any minute. . . . Would the store be open now? Richard was so in need of food when he came in. But that letter had come. A letter from Richard. Possibly she would be able to get some eggs. Yes, we would not ever have seen one another again if he had been on that ship. . . . The milk-place was generally open later than the others. She had got to the first floor when, turning back, she went up the steps again, got the door unlocked and went through the letter again. It was an error. Yes, that was it, an error. It was only a piece of paper, words, words put down in pencil. They were part of an earlier existence. Like the post card from the

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military authorities. Years and years back. How was it possible for these words to be the destruction of her existence, when it was so natural, so full and pleasing and happy, every day? ". . . My love for you is as strong as in the old days, and I would be so happy to be back with you at last in our little room. But the food is good and we do not go short."

How did she come to be here? Had she come down the steps, down the street, into the store? How had that come to be? In her thoughts she was seated in her room, reading the letter. Surprised and troubled, she took her eyes from the floor.

"You have no colour to-day, Frau Anna," said the woman at the milk-place. "But a woman in your condition goes up and down. Your Richard was here a minute back. I have some knowledge of what you are going through; I have been through it myself. There's no need for you to have any fears. You're a strong, healthy woman."

He put his hand on the hand-piece of the door. "Not in." Got the door

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unlocked. Inside the room he gave a look round, questioningly. The smell of the letter came to his nose. "Some chemical," he said, and a feeling of fear came over him. "Has anything gone wrong?"

"What did he come in for, then?"

"Oh, he has been questioning me again about the milk for you. But as it is I'm giving you all that it's possible to give."

The knowledge that he would be there when she got back, the walk up the street, the act of going up the steps gave Anna the necessary quiet and control of mind to go through with the event, the full danger of which had now suddenly become clear.

He was waiting by the door, full of the fear that something might have gone wrong with Anna, that the birth might have taken place before its time, and she be dead. Suddenly he saw himself on the railroad, between the lines, the muscles of front and arms stretched tight to keep back the train that came in his direction. The power of chance that had to be stopped at any price.

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Then there was a step outside, coming up. He was conscious that it was hers, and took note of the sound. No one on earth came up the steps as she did. Quickly he gave a turn, completely happy. "There you are! What has been going on?"

They were in the doorway, face to face.

"I have had a letter from him—Richard."

What if she's been false to you while you have been away, and taken someone else? Stretched out in the grass on the steppe Richard's answer came to his ears: "What's it to do with you? At least keep a clean tongue in your head. And as for Anna, I'd—" And he saw how Richard, lifting up the pickaxe, sent it down on to Anna's head.

But she hasn't done anything false at all, was his thought; it's something quite different. He got the door open for Anna. She put down the paper-bag, and as she took a seat, her eyes were on him. "Now give me an account of everything!" She was making no fight against what had come to light, ready for what the future might have in store. It was as if she had said: "Whatever

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comes, it is not possible for me to do anything different. If he puts me to death when he comes back, I will make no attempt to get away."

He was making no attempt to get out of things any more than she. But he was a man, and only gave in to what was to come after a fight with all his force of mind, knife and teeth to the end. Death, yes! But not giving up! That was his thought and he said so to her.

They made no move, and the last of the light was gone. The four summers in the steppe, where every day was like the last, without the company of men, and the winter months in the great building of the prison, took form as pictures before her eyes. He kept back nothing. It made him happy to let her into the secret of all his thoughts, to take down their walls, and to make clear to her how his feeling had come to birth, increasing outside all limits.

Frequently his story was broken into by her questions, and the answers he gave to them were the answers he would have given to himself. "One day Rich-

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ard said to me: ' My love for Anna is the love of a man for the woman who is married to him. And that's how it is with her. Because I'm married to her. She's a woman with good sense.' And then I suddenly saw you, Anna, in a road lined with trees, in *the* road. You were waiting there. Night was coming on. Nobody but you. Only you. That took a grip of me so. You were waiting. That's the only possible word. It was as if you weren't on this earth. And then it was all over with me. Then you were with me ; I saw you night and day.

" From that time I had full knowledge of you."

Her eyes were shut ; her body was bent over to him, and their faces were touching one another. In the harmony between them, so deeply happy, time and existence had no place. Such pleasure is not given to man, because pain is at hand, the pain of living which, before ten breaths are taken, goes forward again, on its great, unseeing way.

" If he doesn't let me go, it will not be possible for us to go on living."

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" If that's the only way," he said, and for a minute his eyes were dark. And because they were so ready for death together, the white seconds of living were again theirs.

As she got the meal ready and he went on with his work, it seemed to them that the cooking, the taking of their food, their work, the round of the day with its thoughts and feelings, were no longer important, had no present sense, and no value. Living had become for them from now on a business of waiting. Their existence was nothing but waiting, which is a death-blow to living.

Turning from his work he went through Richard's letter again, seated at the table his head supported on his hands, as though doing some hard piece of work.

" . . . . To-day we're steaming on again. Through mine fields all the time,' " he went on, reading out loud. And a desire, an idea, made its way from his blood to his brain ; he said : " Possibly— " and came to a stop.

What he had in his mind was clear to her directly ; her eyes were turned to the floor.

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They had put their finger on existence at a point where wrong-doing comes up like a spring of dark water.

But, when, looking up, they became conscious, with their eyes on one another, of the deep secret of their love, which was their great argument against Richard's right, they came to themselves again. They had no desire now for Richard's death, and were ready to make payment if this was the price of loving.

This deepest relation between two persons, flaming at its heart with the secret purpose of existence, gives the power to overcome a number of dangers, which for others would have their end in trouble, disease, and sometimes death.

November came. The thick red ice, covering Europe, formed of freezing blood poisoning a hundred million existences, was cracked. Ruling families went from power. The towns, tired out and poor, were full, of the military. Prisoners were now being given back. One or two men who had been taken prisoner came back to the building. Carl and Anna were waiting. At any

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hour the door might be opened by Richard, or he might come back in a month, or a year, or possibly not at all.

Carl's desires and feelings were in a sleeping condition. His existence would be broken into pieces like glass. Frequently it seemed to Anna that it would be better if Richard would come at that minute, because it would put an end to her present condition of doubt, in which sometimes she had hope, and at other times was conscious only that the pain of death would not be so sharp as the pain of parting.

Others living in the buildings were full of stories of the trouble caused in families by men coming back from the Front, and specially in one family, where the end would probably be a very sad one. The man, to whom the use of a gun had become an everyday event, had said he might put an end to her with his gun before he had knowledge of the worst.

Carl was in danger of being out of work, because he had said he would not go and put up some new machines at a works in another town. Every day, a minute

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after he had gone out of the building and got into the street-electric, he became unhappy and full of fear that Richard would come back while he was gone, and he was troubled by these feelings all through the day at his work. Only when he was back again in their little room was he able to get free from them.

One morning, after he had gone quite a long distance, he got off the electric certain that he had seen Richard in another that had gone in the opposite direction. He went back at a run, and saw in the distance a man from the war in a long coat going into the house. When he got to the street door, he had a feeling as though he had been given a hard blow which had taken his breath from him. Now it had come, the feared event. He went quite slowly up the steps. At the door everything seemed to go round and round. He had no knowledge of how he got it open.

No sign of the man. Anna was seated by the window, doing nothing, not moving. She was waiting. She was not in the

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least surprised to see him, with his face from which all feeling had gone.

He went to her without a word, took her head against his side, and went quietly out again.

### VI

A railway train, so long that the last part of it was able to be seen from one small station when the engine was going into a second, went slowly as a cart through the fields of snow.

Everywhere, on the open stages at the ends of the divisions, men from the Front were seated or on their feet, prisoners now free, men of every sort coming back to their families, with their boxes, bags and parcels. Parcels, heads, and backs were pushed out of every window, and in the animal division "for eight horses" from which the wide sliding-door was gone, there was a grey group of men. Ten thousand had somehow been forced into the train which had seats for three thousand. A sad, sad train, slowly making its way through a sad country.

The train was going at one-tenth of

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its normal rate. There were no time-tables now. Frequently the driver had to come to a stop and get up steam again. The engine was very old and working badly, the coal was half sand and stones.

A man on his machine, in the snow of the country road was able to keep up with them, and to have a discussion in comfort with a man at the window. "Yes yes, war against the Government! It will be different now. It will all be changed." And when the train came to a stop he got on it. There were no tickets, there was no longer anything.

In one division of the train, as grey and without light as a prison-room under the surface of the earth, with a strong smell of smoke and wet, mixed with the strange acid smell of men who have been very warm for a long time, one man, who came from a country where it was possible to get chocolate, took from his pocket a small piece of this sweet-tasting food which was so hard to get. It had a cover of silver paper.

"Ah, where did you get that from? That's very interesting; yes, that's very

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interesting," said a Bavarian, smiling feebly. "Let me get the smell of it. Is it true chocolate?"

He was given a smell of it. All eyes were fixed on the chocolate, on the silver paper, bright as a star in the dark land of the dead.

In the deep quiet, in the middle of which there came a sudden outburst of pointed humour, the owner took off a very small piece with his pocket knife to put into the outstretched hand of every one present. Then he put it back in his coat pocket. "For the little ones, you see, for my little ones."

Then he took out camera pictures of his family and their mother. One by one, pictures of their families were produced from their pocket-books, by everyone. The pictures went from hand to hand. There was a general noise of talking—stories, details, words of surprise or disgust. Nothing was clear. Voices broken with feeling. These men coming back to their families had nothing. Nothing but their great desire.

Richard gave back the picture to the

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owner of the chocolate. "I have not got one of my woman. Frequently I have been unhappy in all these years because I have not been able to get my memory clear and see what she is like. But the time will not be long now."

"Then you will see her in the natural," said the Bavarian. All the time he was smiling in the same feeble way. He was dressed almost in black, not in military things. He had on a soft hat, and the hair on his chin was cut to a point. All through the journey he had been on his feet, his hand on the parcel-shelf, and he had a word for everyone.

One after another a number of shocks went through the train. It came to a stop again. They had got into the way of that. The talk went on. Richard made his way across parcels and legs and friends seated on the floor. There was a wall of boxes in front of the door so he got out through the window.

Some one came out from almost every division. They were stretching themselves, their mouths wide open, and got loose the lower buttons of their coats.

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So full was the train that the wash-places were being used as resting places for the men on the journey. And where they were not being used in this way, their doors were supporting a wall of boxes.

Richard took two or three unequal steps with great care. He was testing his power of walking. A short time before he came away the wheel of a cart had gone over his leg. He had been two weeks on the way, day and night. After he had made certain that the train would be there a little time, he went off some distance across the snow, and when he was seated, got the leg of his trousers rolled up. All the skin over his leg-bone, from foot to knee, was deep green like fruit which has not been touched by the sun.

The others had all got on to the train again. He was by himself on the bright snow-field, a black, sharply-outlined form: wide in back, the military mark gone from his hat, his army coat going down to his feet. Through the thick growth on face and chin, covering almost everything but the nose, his eyes were to be

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seen like those of an animal that is all by itself and looking for company.

Black, dirty, covered with insects, uncared for, waste produce of the war-machine, he seemed, as his black form made its way to that invention of present-day man, the railway train, like some early man coming out of his hole in the earth.

His thought was: ‘In two hours I will be there in our room with Anna,’ to whom at that same minute the birth-help was saying: “Everything is going on well.” Although she had no feeling of pain, Anna had given way to Carl’s request, and had herself looked at.

“ You are quite a picture. And I see such a number. My word, if only they had some idea of what was to come! But you are a strong healthy woman. A pleasure to see,” said the old woman smiling. Anna was on the day-bed without her garments, her skin white against the covers. The air in her well-warmed room was full of the smell of apples cooking in the oven.

Richard’s black, uncombed ball of hair

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came to the window, and he put his long arms through into the division. He was pulled in by his friends.

When it was almost night the train went slowly past the houses of the outer part of the town, by the long low works building where Carl was at his work-table.

The men in his division of the train had got some knowledge of one another on the journey. They had taken part in the talk with the greatest attention though some of it was about quite unimportant details. They went on with their talking, but they gave only half-looks and half-answers. By now, everyone's attention was somewhere different, by now everyone in his thoughts was with his family.

Richard was a man of great physical balance and unchanging outlook. He was not moved by events giving pleasure or pain, so long as the were within fixed, but very wide, limits.

He had not been touched in the least by the bitter experiences in the war-prison, which went on from day to day,

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without end, sometimes hard, at all times disgusting. To a number of his friends these same experiences had been a living death, crushing them till they were broken. So long as the limit of his control was not overstepped, so long as the weight of trouble was not at cracking-point, he seemed in feeling and behaviour as though nothing out of the normal had taken place.

On one day only had his control given way. He had come back to the prison in great need of food after a day of hard work. The man in authority came into the prisoners' common room. For no cause and without saying anything, he roughly took the basin from Richard's hand, put the food on the black, stamped floor, and pointing, said in a loud and angry voice: "Take it! . . . Take it, you pig! . . . Get down and take it up off the floor with your tongue!" And he gave Richard a blow in the face.

At such a time as this, though moved to do something violent, Richard gave no sign of his feelings. But suddenly he was like a machine, which has been put

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out of order by a touch on one of the controls, and goes on as before but with its connections broken.

So he went out, walking at his normal rate, went across the open space to the out-building where the work instruments were kept and took his pickaxe—it was quite clear to him that half an hour after making an end of the man his punishment would be death. But that thought had no effect on him any longer. That was the other man's business ; it was his error, because he had been cruel in a way which made his man violent. There was nothing more to give thought to now. Nothing more to be done. It was quite clear that the only thing for him to do was to put an end to the man, as before it had been clear than one had to go through the other pains and troubles unmoved, taking them simply as facts.

When he came back the man had gone from the prison building. Only the chance that he was sent to another place that same night had kept him and Richard from destruction.

When at last the train got to the station

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and came to a stop, Richard said a last word to his friends in the quiet, controlled way which was as much a part of him as his head. All by himself he was going across the station square, walking unequally because of his damaged leg, with his grey parcel under his arm, at the time that Anna was getting the table ready for herself and Carl who was now starting on his way back from the far-off works. All his pleasure and great desire to be back with Anna were unable to make him go any quicker. For four years he had been desiring Anna, and in that time he had become trained in the art of waiting. Now he was as good as with her. The end he had been desiring was at hand. No deeper feelings would be his when he saw Anna face to face than he was experiencing now.

But there was something care-free about him, a pleasure in existence that was not normally his. Its bright rays were playing about his face, generally so fixed and unchanging, like some small insect dancing round a great animal.

It was a long way. No electrics were

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working in those days. Carl's way from the works to the building was about a third longer. But he was walking sharply and he had no damaged leg.

Anna had put the things on the table for the meal, and went down to get some bread. At the end of the day, with the knowledge that in a short time Carl would be back, her mind was more at rest.

A cart overtook Richard, pulled by two strong horses, and open at the back. There was nothing in it. The driver came to a stop and gave this tired man, newly back from the war, the offer of a lift. Richard got in, back first. The horses went on their way, stepping out slowly.

He had to go on foot the last part of the way. The automobile worker was at the street door with Marie. Richard took a long look at the building. Four years back it had been new; now the stone-work was in need of attention, and coming to pieces.

"Are you looking for someone in the house?" questioned the machine-worker, and Anna's friend, whose feelings were quickly worked upon, was looking with

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unquiet eyes at the dirty uncared-for man, hard as iron, strong of muscle, but with signs of having been through the hard times of the war-years.

The strange, flaming pleasure in him made him say : " Yes, yes, the woman to whom I am married." And he gave her name. " She is living here now, isn't she ? "

" Yes, but—" said Marie, uncertain of herself, and was then at a loss how to go on.

" —but it is only possible for Frau Anna to be married to one man at a time and not to two," said a young workman, smiling brightly and ending her thought. He was in the doorway, and Richard had by this time gone through into the house.

As he went slowly on, with his damaged leg, his long coat brushing the steps, tired, dirty, a little bent, it was as though he had been making his way on foot for four years, all by himself, through black fear, through pain and bitter loss, to come at last to that place.

Anna became conscious of his loud, unequal step. It was like the sound of

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two men pulling up a great weight. Her face was so bright and happy, as the faces of women sometimes are when they are about to have a baby.

He made had no noise on the door. The door was open. A black strange man was in the doorway.

No word was said between them. Anna's question was in her eyes which were fixed on him.

With one look round he had taken in the details of the room.

"Well, Anna, have you no memory who I am?"

She had no knowledge of him. She would have let him go by in the street. But it was he—clearly, it was he. The quick current of her blood gave her a burning feeling under the skin.

He went up to her and put out his hand. She gave him her ice-cold fingers. And then he took their relations to one another completely without question. A thick growth of hair in which somewhere there was a mouth, came in the direction of her face. Almost unconsciously, she went back from him.

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"Am I so dirty? Yes, that's the journey!" Not till then did he put down his parcel, on the same seat as Carl had done months before, got off his coat and, suddenly conscious how out of place that long, thick, dirty garment was in the clean room, took it up by the collar, uncertain what to do with it.

Again his eyes went round the room, lighting up with pleasure at the thought of living in a well-warmed, clean room, offering every comfort. Then his eyes came to rest on Anna, and pleasure overcame him; "Well, Anna, old Anna! You have been waiting a long time, and now you are surprised that it is all over."

And she, who had made up her mind a thousand times to give him a full account of everything directly he came, she was acting falsely by saying nothing. How was it possible for her to give him his death-blow? Although for months, day and night, her thoughts had been on the event of his coming back, she was not fully conscious of how important, how serious the position was till she was face to face with the fact.

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She was unable to say anything. No word would come from her lips. There was nothing more to put up a fight for. He was troubled and surprised when he saw her go to the door, stiff as a body newly back from the dead, and so out.

Down the steps, through the squares at a run, down the chief street : in the direction of Carl. But Carl had taken a short way down a side road as the electrics were not working, and did not get into the chief street till Anna had gone from view.

The young workman who had said that it was not possible for Frau Anna to be married to more than one man was, as before, smoking in the doorway. His eyes were on Carl as he went by him with a questioning smile. "What will they do now?" he said to his two friends, to whom he had given an account of the earlier events. By now the news had got round to a number of persons in the building that a man had come back from the war who said he was married to Anna.

As Carl went quickly on and across the

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square, men and women were at their windows to see him.

From the time that the thought of Richard coming back had been hanging over them like a cloud, the two lovers had been living a sort of fiction existence made by themselves in which nothing and no one but themselves had a place. So deeply were they chained to one another in thought that the smallest act was a statement of love.

Without ever having given himself a reason, Carl made a point of going slower when he got to the first floor. And to-day as on other days, this act gave him the feeling directly that Anna was there, ready and waiting for him.

He got the door open, in the belief that she had been hearing him come up the steps, and that she, like him, her heart a flame, was sending out her love to him.

So sudden was the change in his feelings, and so great its force that it was like a man's experience might be if he went from his room for a minute or two and when he came back and took a step

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inside went down into nothing, because there was no floor.

"You?" said Richard, in surprise. But he was unmoved. He let go of a dirty shirt which was in his hands and it went back into his open parcel. "How surprising to see you again, and after such a short time! . . . I only got here three minutes back. Isn't that strange? . . . But take a seat." He made a motion in the direction of the seat. "Or there, on the day-bed."

Something kept Carl from putting a question about where Anna was. He took a seat. On the bed.

As when he was coming from the station, Richard had that happy air of pleasure; such as it is only possible to see in a great, iron-hard man when, after using all the force that is in him, he has come at last, completely unbroken, to the point for which he was making.

"Are you living here, then? . . . Had any food? When did you get back? She will be here in a minute, and then she will give us a meal. It's all ready."

He gave a look of pleasure, pleasure

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kept well in control, like that of a boy with the things he has been given at Christmas, at the table ready for the meal, and then back at Carl, as if to say : " You see, that's my way of living now. That's Anna. That made up for everything."

The weight over his heart became greater as Carl saw Richard take the things out of his parcel, put the clean garments in the drawers, and the dirty ones on the seat at one end of the room.

" Anna will have to get these washed directly. They will have to be put in boiling water with a cleaning chemical." Without a thought, every detail of the room was clear in his memory, he gave the upper drawer a pull and put his papers in the right-hand side, where they had been before. " Don't be on your best behaviour. Take your coat off. . . . It's good to see you here."

It's because he goes about as though I was in his house that I was unable to put a question about Anna. . . . It is important to say everything now. It is important to say it now.

With his mind made up his power of

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acting came back to him. All feeling was gone. It's a question of living or facing death, he said to himself, every muscle suddenly tight as a cord, and ice-cold, as a man who takes up his position for a fight, ready to put an end to the other man or himself be sent to his death.

"Here's Anna coming," he said, and got up. Richard was not conscious of the deep division placed between them by the way in which those three words were said.

With skin wet, eyes wide and unseeing, hair hanging over her face, Anna came into the room, almost unable to keep her balance. "Is he here?"

She first gave a look in the wrong direction and then let herself go into Carl's arms.

With her body against his, he was conscious under the ice of a bright point of pleasure. Richard came over to them, fearing something was wrong, but with no idea of the relations between them. "What's wrong? Are you ill?"

She had force to get herself free, but that was all. She put herself against

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the wall for support, her eyes fixed in front of her, troubled and full of fear.

It seemed to Carl as though he was firing a gun as he said : " You will have to let Anna go."

Richard's brain would not take it in. It came from a great distance ; a long time was needed before it got to him. While it was on the way, before it came to him he was saying to himself : If he's had her, I'll put them on the floor, the two of them ; and they will not get up again very quickly. And in his fear that she might go from him completely, he was ready the second after to let the past be the past.

" What's wrong ? " he said. His mind was quiet again now, and the thought came to him : what foolish things the man is saying—getting ideas into his head. " Come, say something, Anna. What's wrong ? . . . Anna ? "

No answer. He made a move to go to her. Carl came between them. " Anna is married to me. I will keep nothing from you."

Suddenly he saw that Anna was going

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to have a baby. "Oh, that's it? . . . What more is there to say to me now, you dog!" But in the same quiet way in which at the prison he had gone from the building to get his pickaxe.

He has had her one time, she has done it one time, and now she is going to have a baby. And he is not going to keep anything from me, the dog! As for Anna and her baby, I will have to make that my business. We will have to get over that. But as for him there, I have nothing but hate for him! Every detail of the room clear, he went to the place where the wood-cutting instrument was.

The blow that was to overcome him came as a shock, and from quite another direction. Anna went quickly to him. "It's only possible to be with him, now. Put an end to me! That's what it's come to, Richard, that's what it's come to!"

"Only possible with him? Only with him? . . . You will not have me? Will you not have me?"

"There is no other way now." That was outside his belief, more than his mind would take in. And so he was no-

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longer able to give the blow. Something gave way inside him, like a tree that is cut down. He took a seat at the table, doubting what had been said.

"Will not? . . . Why not, Anna, why not? . . . Will not, Anna? Only love for him?"

The desire came to him to go on making a fight for the light of his existence, though its flame had been put out. "Come, what is it? Make it clear to me, make it clear to me," he said, at a loss.

He made a move to get up. "Well, I will have, I will have—" He was not certain what it was he had to do. He took his seat again. After that he did not say another word.

They saw him there, his body all bent up, so uncared-for and dirty from head to foot, all his supports gone, a man who had not given way to crying from the time he was a boy, and was now seated, with bent back dry-eyed, looking into space—and they were cut by the pain of his loss. From then on their fear was gone.

From the distance Carl's voice came to

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her, saying, "The time has come for us to go now," and she went to put some things in a bag.

Frequently she had to go by Richard, frequently her eyes came to rest on him, but the thought did not at any time come into her mind to be guided by her feeling of regret for him and let Carl go. For nothing, nothing on earth is so cruel as love, in which the impulse to take care of the loved one and to have no thought for oneself goes hand in hand with the most violent self-interest.

Marie made a little noise on the door, fearing to go in. Then, very uncertain of herself, she came in. No one said anything. She gave such help as she was able and saw the cold process of Richard's destruction.

They went about, getting drawers open, putting things in the bag. Richard saw nothing. Nothing of what they were doing came to his ears. Pictures of his past with Anna came and went before his mind's eye. Everything had been so good. He made a move, lifting up his head, making his back straight, as though

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he were going to put his questions again, to make another attempt ; his head went down without his saying anything.

Anna had done everything. She put down the handbag. "Richard." And took it up again.

"Only go," he said, and for the first time his mouth was to be seen, wide open, under the growth of hair round lips and chin.

She saw it would be cruel to put out her hand. At a loss what to do she gave a look at Carl and Marie, and then went to the door.

It was with Carl as with a law expert who has put up a fight for a man who is given the punishment of death, and goes one morning, an hour before the sad event, to see him for the last time, and is not certain what to say, a word of parting or "Good morning", or how to go. He went out without a word. The soft, regularly coloured skin of Marie's face was wet with crying, now the drops were rolling quickly down.

A man and some women were on the second floor near the steps ; they said

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nothing when the two lovers went by. Friends who were in a group at the doorway to the second square, in the middle of a discussion of what had taken place, took a step to one side, let them go through, and then went after them.

The group of boys and girls and the two friends, Elfi and Alma came into line with the others. Angry faces at street windows. Loud cries and the first angry word let loose the cruel words that came after.

Persons in the building who had not been given any trouble, and whose eyes were more or less shut to the open relations of women with men, were bitter at the way in which Anna had kept things secret and so for six months made use of the belief and good feeling of everyone round her as a cover for her wrong-doing.

Marie, overcome by her feelings, disgusted by the cries and angry words, said in a broken voice to the persons who were pushing round the lovers: "She herself took him for Herr Richard."

The air was full of laughing and loud cries. The walls gave back the sound.

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In this way they went from the house. Carl had the bag.

On through the snow. It was some time before the first persons went back. And for some time after that the older boys went on with them. One made a snowball and sent it after the two lovers. Then he went back at a run after the others, hands in his trousers pockets, head a little bent to keep out the cold.

"Go back to him, Marie ; go back to him, do please," said Anna.

Marie had herself made up her mind to keep Richard company. Ten steps more and she came to a stop, happy again and quite her natural self. Then in a loud voice, clear as a bell, with a note of pleasure in it : "Anna ! Be happy, Anna, I am going back now."

They came to the wide, unfertile stretch between the town and their group of streets. Their footsteps made their mark on the smooth surface of the deep, new snow.

They went into the tree-lined road in which Carl, out on the steppe, had seen Anna waiting. Moon and snow made

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the night bright. The shades of the freezing branches made strange designs on the white surface. The stars gave a cold, hard light.

They said nothing ; they had no thoughts. They went on walking with the knowledge of the secret thing which was between them ; they would be parted by nothing till death.